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Washington awards \$174,000 for local welfare-to-work successes

OLYMPIA – Sixteen community partnerships in Washington will share a total of \$174,000 in state bonus awards for helping low-income families find work, leave welfare and become self-sufficient, Washington WorkFirst officials announced today.

“WorkFirst partners have improved the quality of life for thousands of needy families. Welfare caseloads are 46 percent lower than they were five years ago, despite the challenges of recent program budget constraints and high unemployment,” said Roxanne Lowe, executive policy analyst with the Office of Financial Management. “These awards recognize those successes.”

Award recipients will be honored during a reception with Gov. Gary Locke in December.

Washington annually awards performance bonuses to WorkFirst Local Planning Areas, partnerships of government agencies, nonprofit community organizations and other groups that provide services for participants in WorkFirst, the state’s welfare-to-work program. The competitive grants are given to communities that have shown significant achievements in specific areas, including helping parents find and keep jobs, reducing welfare caseloads and collecting child support payments.

“Bonuses will be used to strengthen programs and find innovative ways to help parents compete in the job market and provide for their children,” Lowe said.

Past winners have used the awards to pay for job fairs, staff and client training, employer outreach, family planning materials, specialized software and research.

WorkFirst services are administered by the state’s Department of Social and Health Services, Employment Security Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. Local partners include community organizations, employers, tribes, colleges and labor unions.

This year’s winning WorkFirst Local Planning Areas:

- **Asotin-Garfield**

Award: 2nd Place – Most Improved Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Returns
Accomplishment: Improvement in preventing families from returning to welfare in the past year.
Amount: \$4,000

- **Benton-Franklin**

2nd Place – Employment Retention
Accomplishment: Helping working parents stay on the job.
Amount: \$4,000

- **Cowlitz-Wahkiakum**

1st Place – Most Improved Composite Award

Accomplishment: Most improved overall performance in the past year.

Amount: \$6,000

- **Forks**

2nd Place – Most Improved Caseload Reduction

Accomplishment: Decrease in the percentage of adults on welfare in the past year.

Amount: \$4,000

- **King Eastside**

Composite Award

Accomplishment: Best overall performance.

Amount: \$60,000

1st Place – TANF Returns

Accomplishment: Preventing families from returning to welfare.

Amount: \$6,000

1st Place – Child Support

Accomplishment: Collecting child support payments for WorkFirst families.

Amount: \$6,000

1st Place – Most Improved TANF Returns

Accomplishment: Improvement in preventing families from returning to welfare.

Amount: \$6,000

- **Klickitat**

1st Place – Community Jobs

Accomplishment: Based on the percent of Community Jobs participants who find unsubsidized work within a year of enrollment. (The program provides subsidized work for the hardest-to-serve welfare recipients.)

Amount: \$2,500

- **Lewis**

2nd Place – Most Improved Employment Reduction

Accomplishment: Improvement in helping working parents stay on the job in the past year.

Amount: \$4,000

- **Mason**

1st Place – Most Improved Exits Due to Employment

Accomplishment: Improvement in helping parents leave welfare for work.

Amount: \$6,000

- **North Seattle**

1st Place – Employment Retention

Accomplishment: Helping working parents stay on the job.

Amount: \$6,000

- **Okanogan**

2nd Place – Most Improved Composite Award

Accomplishment: Improved overall performance in the past year.

Amount: \$4,000

1st Place – Most Improved Caseload Reduction

Accomplishment: Decrease in the percent of adults on welfare in the past year.

Amount: \$6,000

1st Place – Most Improved Employment Retention

Accomplishment: Improvement in helping working parents stay on the job.

Amount: \$6,000

1st Place – Most Improved Child Support

Accomplishment: Improvement in collecting child support payments for WorkFirst families.

Amount: \$6,000

- **Port Angeles**

2nd Place – Community Jobs

Accomplishment: Based on the percent of Community Jobs participants who find unsubsidized work within a year of enrollment. (The program provides subsidized work for the hardest-to-serve welfare recipients.)

Amount: \$1,500

2nd Place – Most Improved Exits Due to Employment

Accomplishment: Improvement in helping parents leave welfare for work.

Amount: \$4,000

- **Port Townsend**

2nd Place – Child Support

Accomplishment: Collecting child support payments for WorkFirst families.

Amount: \$4,000

- **Rainier-Capitol Hill-Belltown**

2nd Place – Most Improved Child Support

Accomplishment: Improvement in collecting child support payments for WorkFirst families.

Amount: \$4,000

- **South Snohomish**

1st Place – Caseload Reduction

Accomplishment: Decrease in the percent of adults on welfare from the time WorkFirst began.

Award: \$6,000

1st Place – Exits Due to Employment

Accomplishment: Based on the percent of parents who get a job and leave welfare in three months.

Award: \$6,000

2nd Place – TANF Returns

Accomplishment: Preventing families from returning to welfare

Award: \$4,000

- **Whatcom County**

2nd Place – Exits Due to Employment

Accomplishment: Percent of parents who get a job and leave welfare in three months.

Award: \$4,000

- **Whidbey Island**

2nd Place – Caseload Reduction

Accomplishment: Decrease in the percent of adults on welfare from the time WorkFirst began.

Amount: \$4,000

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